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ABSTRACT

The U.S. Department of Education has shown support for vocational education through a number of initiatives. Task forces on, for example, defense preparedness and entrepreneurship education have been established at the national level. Two new programs--corrections education and rural education--have been established and have had a significant impact. In partnership with other organizations the Department has initiated a series of major development projects to enhance work force education and training. Major issues of importance to vocational education are lack of the basic academic skills in youth, international competitiveness, national defense, and productivity. Vocational education is related to many elements of change in society, including demographics (lower birth rates, an aging work force), students' lack of basic skills, national policy, and legislation. Vocational education is marked by progress at all levels. The Department has particularly focused on priority initiatives. Perhaps one of the brightest accomplishments of the vocational education field is its capacity for incorporating and demonstrating choice, content, and character. Careful, responsible research is the key to keeping vocational education on the cutting edge. For example, research has shown that vocational education plays a role in preventing dropouts, benefits graduates in the work force, and benefits employers. (YLB)

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UPDATE ON THE CONDITION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION 1985

PRESENTED TO THE
ANNUAL FALL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE
OF THE STATE DIRECTORS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

BY

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UPDATE ON THE CONDITION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION 1985

I. INTRODUCTION

I AM HERE TODAY TO GIVE WHAT THE PROGRAM SAYS IS AN "UPDATE ON THE CONDITION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION." MY COMMENTS COME AT A PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE TIME FOR ME. AS YOU KNOW, SEPTEMBER 30 WILL BE MY LAST DAY AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION. IT HAS BEEN A REWARDING EXPERIENCE TO WORK WITH ALL OF YOU, AND I LEAVE MY POSITION CONFIDENT THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WILL CONTINUE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF OUR COUNTRY.

IN MY LETTER OF RESIGNATION TO THE PRESIDENT I SAID: "YOUR SUPPORT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING. I ESPECIALLY APPRECIATE THE STATEMENT YOU MADE AT THE VOCATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CLUBS OF AMERICA'S SKILL OLYMPICS IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, WHEN YOU STATED 'WE SHOULD SEE THAT ALL OUR YOUNG PEOPLE GET A GOOD GROUNDING IN ENGLISH AND LITERATURE, HISTORY, MATH, SCIENCE AND THE OTHER BASICS. BUT WE MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT OUR VOCATIONAL CLASSROOMS ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS ANY OTHER.'"

AS I TOLD THE PRESIDENT, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE SKILLS, PRODUCTIVITY, AND COMPETITIVENESS OF OUR NATION'S WORKFORCE DEPEND TO A GREAT EXTENT ON THAT RECOGNITION AND EMPHASIS.

MY EXPERIENCE IN WORKING FOR THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SECRETARIES BELL AND BENNETT DURING THE LAST FOUR AND ONE-HALF YEARS HAS BEEN REWARDING AND FULFILLING AND PARTICULARLY SO BECAUSE I WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE INVOLVED IN A NUMBER OF EXCITING INITIATIVES. LET ME SHARE WITH YOU A FEW OF THESE INITIATIVES--

o WE ESTABLISHED TASK FORCES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AND IN SEVERAL INSTANCES ASKED YOU TO DO LIKEWISE. FOR EXAMPLE:

- <u>DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS</u>. THIS LED TO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NATIONAL SECURITY. FOUR ACTIVE WORKING GROUPS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ARE:

  1. EMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL AS TEACHERS OF SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, TECHNOLOGY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

  2. TRANSFER OF DOD-DEVELOPED EDUCATION AND TRAINING TECHNOLOGY TO THE CIVILIAN SECTOR.

  3. INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO THE ARMED FORCES.

  4. ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES (U.S. ARMY BASELINE SKILLS RESEARCH PROJECT).

- ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION. THIS TASK FORCE IS WORKING TO FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

- PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THIS EFFORT INVOLVES COMBINING THE EXPERTISE OF OVER 100,000 "VIP" PRIVATE SECTOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION. THIS YEAR WE ARE PLANNING A SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO HONOR THEM AND ALSO TO INVOLVE THE NEW "TECHNICAL COMMITTEES."

- HIGH TECHNOLOGY. A TASK FORCE HAS BEEN INSTITUTED TO IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL ISSUES GERMANE TO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FABRIC OF OUR NATION.

- ADULT LITERACY. THIS MAJOR DEPARTMENTAL NATIONAL INITIATIVE IS CONTINUING ITS EFFORTS TO BRING A NATIONAL FOCUS ON ADULT LITERACY WITH EMPHASIS ON PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND VOLUNTEERISM.

o ADDITIONALLY TWO IMPORTANT NEW PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

- Corrections Education. This program provides resources and technical assistance to State and Federal prisons and jails in order to promote the availability of effective vocational education programs to over 2.2 million adults and juveniles.

- Rural Education. This program has as its major task bringing National focus to improving rural education across America.

o We at the Department in partnership with other organizations initiated a series of major development projects designed to enhance workforce education and training. These include--

- The Johnstown Model Retraining Project to develop a training program for displaced coal and steel workers.

- The Chrysler/UAW Model Retraining Project designed to develop a training program for displaced auto workers.

- The Ford National/UAW Development and Training Program which will bring vocational counseling, assessment and instructional services to 75,000 blue collar workers.

- The General Motors/UAW/Michigan Department of Education/U.S. Education Department Partnership.

- I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO MENTION THE SUPPORT AND FOCUS WHICH THE DEPARTMENT HAS GIVEN TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THROUGH ITS POLICY STATEMENTS ON--

  - VOCATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
  - ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION
  - RURAL EDUCATION
  - CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

- FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO POINT TO THE SECRETARY'S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS BEGUN IN 1981. THIS PROGRAM ANNUALLY RECOGNIZES TEN PROGRAMS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY FOR THEIR EXCELLENCE. A SIMILAR PROGRAM IS BEING INSTITUTED THIS YEAR FOR ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

AS I LEAVE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND LOOK BACK AT THE CHANGES WE'VE SEEN IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, ITS CHALLENGES, THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS, AND WHERE THE FIELD APPEARS TO BE HEADED, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF MY REFLECTIONS. FIRST I'LL DISCUSS THE STATE OF THE FIELD AS IT STANDS NOW, THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT HAS TO FLOURISH AND LOOK AT SOME GLOBAL ISSUES AFFECTING EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY.

II. MAJOR ISSUES

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DOES NOT EXIST IN A VACUUM! IT IS NOT ISOLATED FROM THE MAJOR ISSUES OF OUR SOCIETY ANY MORE THAN IT IS ISOLATED FROM THE CRITICAL ISSUES OF EDUCATION IN GENERAL!!

LET ME REFLECT FOR A MOMENT ON A FEW OF THESE MAJOR ISSUES AND SUGGEST THAT WHILE THEY ARE BROAD IN SCOPE, AND GENERAL IN NATURE, THEY ARE OF ENORMOUS IMPORTANCE FOR US IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

AS I MENTION THEM BRIEFLY, I WOULD ASK EACH OF YOU TO REFLECT FOR A MOMENT ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE ISSUES HAVE ALREADY IMPACTED UPON YOUR ACTIVITIES AND ALSO SPECULATE UPON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY WILL CONTINUE TO DEMAND YOUR ATTENTION.

(1) <u>LACK OF THE BASIC ACADEMIC SKILLS IN OUR YOUTH</u>

DECLINING TEST SCORES WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT WE IN EDUCATION ARE LOSING GROUND IN PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BASIC SKILLS IN OUR CHILDREN. NOT ONLY WILL THIS LOSS AFFECT US AS A NATION, IT WILL ALSO DIMINISH OUR ABILITY TO DEVELOP RELEVANT VOCATIONAL SKILLS IN OUR LEARNERS.

(2) INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

THE WORLD HAS BECOME THE AMERICAN MARKETPLACE; WE NOT ONLY SELL THERE, WE ALSO BUY THERE. IF WE ARE TO BE COMPETITIVE IN THIS MARKETPLACE WITH THE GOODS AND SERVICES PRODUCED BY OUR WORKFORCE -- A WORKFORCE WE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HELPED TRAIN AND RETRAIN -- IT MUST PROVIDE US WITH A "COMPETITIVE EDGE."

(3) NATIONAL DEFENSE

IN ORDER TO DEFEND OUR WAY OF LIFE, AND MAINTAIN OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, WE HAVE DEVELOPED AN ENORMOUSLY SOPHISTICATED DEFENSE SYSTEM. THIS SYSTEM MUST BE KEPT CURRENT AND OPERATIONAL; AND WE CAN ONLY DO THIS THROUGH PEOPLE... PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO CREATE, EXPAND, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN THIS SYSTEM.

(4) PRODUCTIVITY

AS A WAY OF INCREASING OUR PRODUCTIVITY, WE ARE CONSTANTLY BEING CHALLENGED TO ADVANCE THE EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY. WE MUST, IN ORDER TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE, PRODUCE OUR GOODS AND SERVICES FOR LESS. THE "OLD WAY" MUST BE EXAMINED TO DETERMINE IF IT IS THE MOST PRODUCTIVE WAY. ANY CHANGES FROM THE "OLD WAY" WILL, IN LARGE MEASURE, BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH PEOPLE; AND THEY IN TURN WILL NEED TRAINING. AND, LET US NEVER FORGET, IF WE WANT TO INCREASE OUR PRODUCTIVITY, THE WAY WE TRAIN AND EMPLOY OUR "HUMAN CAPITAL" IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE WAY WE APPLY OUR NEW TECHNOLOGY AND INVEST OUR FINANCIAL CAPITAL!

III. STATE OF THE FIELD

LET US NOW TAKE A LOOK AT THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE CARRY OUT OUR MISSION. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES IS RELATED TO MANY, MANY ELEMENTS OF CHANGE IN OUR SOCIETY, FROM DEMOGRAPHICS TO LEGISLATION.

FOR INSTANCE, IF WE JUST LOOK AT SOME KEY DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IN THE U.S., WE KNOW THAT THE NATURE OF THE WORKFORCE IS CHANGING --POPULATION PATTERNS AND SOCIAL PATTERNS ARE AFFECTING THE NUMBER AND KINDS OF PEOPLE WORKING AND LOOKING FOR WORK, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO MUST BE TRAINED FOR WORK. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AFFECT EVEN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN OUR SCHOOLS. THE RECENT AMERICAN VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION STUDY REPORTED DECREASED ENROLLMENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO ME THAT SOME SECONDARY SCHOOL DATA INDICATE THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS MAINTAINING ABOUT THE SAME PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT.

THE LOWER BIRTHRATE IN THE LATE 1960'S AND EARLY 1970'S MEANS LOWER ENROLLMENTS THROUGHOUT AMERICAN EDUCATION. WE CAN SEE THE LOWER ENROLLMENTS IN OUR SECONDARY CLASSROOMS NOW, AND WILL FOR SEVERAL YEARS, UNTIL THE STUDENTS WHO MAKE UP TODAY'S ENROLLMENT SURGE IN THE PRIMARY GRADES MATURE.

BESIDES ENROLLMENTS IN OUR CLASSROOMS, DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS CHANGE THE WORKFORCE, AND THUS CHANGE OUR CHALLENGES AS VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS. FOR INSTANCE, ONE DRAMATIC CHANGE WE'LL BE SEEING IS THAT, DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS, NEW WORKERS WILL BE PREDOMINANTLY FEMALE! THIS WILL BE THE RESULT OF OLDER WOMEN ENTERING OR RE-ENTERING THE WORKFORCE AT THE SAME TIME THE 18-24-YEAR-OLD POPULATION IS DECREASING. WE'LL BE FACED WITH TRAINING A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF WORKFORCE THAN EVER BEFORE.

OUR DEMOGRAPHICS (AND OUR OWN EXPERIENCE) ALSO SHOW US THAT THE WORKFORCE IS AGING. A REPLACEMENT WORKFORCE MUST BE PREPARED, AND YOU ARE THE ONES WHO WILL TAKE ON A MAJOR SHARE OF THE JOB OF DEVELOPING, EDUCATING, AND TRAINING THAT WORKFORCE.

LET ME FOCUS BRIEFLY ON SOME OF THE NEEDS IN SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THE AVA STUDY INDICATED DECREASED ENROLLMENTS IN SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. HOWEVER, THE STUDY ALSO SHOWED THAT WE HAVE WAITING LISTS FOR SOME COURSES -- THE HIGH-TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH OCCUPATIONS COURSES IN PARTICULAR. WE MUST, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, FULFILL OUR OBLIGATION TO OUR STUDENTS TO BRING THEM THE EDUCATION THEY WANT AND, AT THE SAME TIME, OUR CURRICULUM PLANNING WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE MEETING THE COUNTRY'S LABOR MARKET NEEDS. AS WE SEEK TO MEET ALL THESE NEEDS, WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THE EXPENSE OF OUR PROGRAMS, AND SEEK PARTNERSHIPS NOT ONLY BETWEEN STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, BUT WITH PRIVATE INDUSTRY, PROPRIETARY VOCATIONAL

SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBO'S)! USING A QUOTE FROM THE AT & T TELEPHONE COMMERCIAL, WE MUST "REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE!" IN EVERY SEGMENT OF OUR SOCIETY.

IN SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, WE MUST EXAMINE THE AREA OF BASIC SKILLS. VARIOUS REPORTS HAVE FOCUSED NATIONAL ATTENTION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE SKILLS. CERTAINLY ATTENTION IS WARRANTED. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS CONCERN HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON ACADEMIC EDUCATION, AT THE EXPENSE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. IF WE ARE TRULY CONCERNED ABOUT STUDENTS ACQUIRING BASIC SKILLS, SUCH A SHIFT IS UNNECESSARY AND UNFAIR. MORE TIME-ON-TASK IN ACADEMIC ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, AND OTHER STANDARD ACADEMIC COURSES MAY NOT BE A CURE FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL STUDENT'S POOR SHOWING IN THE BASICS. TRUE CONCERN WOULD LOOK FOR A STUDENT'S <u>USE</u> OF BASIC SKILLS. COMPUTATION, COMMUNICATION, APPLIED SCIENCE -- THESE ARE ALL ELEMENTS OF THE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM WHICH CAN BE REINFORCED BY A QUALITY SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM.

WHILE WE KNOW THESE ELEMENTS ARE BUILT INTO GOOD VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, OTHERS MAY NOT BE SO AWARE. WE MUST AGGRESSIVELY GET THE MESSAGE OF WHAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS ALL ABOUT TO NATIONAL POLICYMAKERS. OUR MESSAGE IS SIMPLE BUT IMPORTANT: "QUALITY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CONTRIBUTES ENORMOUSLY TO TECHNICAL AND TO BASIC SKILLS, YIELDING AT ITS BEST A WELL-ROUNDED, PRODUCTIVE WORKER WHO IS AWARE OF AND USES BASIC AMERICAN VALUES IN HIS OR HER WORK."

THAT'S WHAT WE WANT POLICYMAKERS TO REMEMBER AND INCORPORATE INTO THEIR DECISION-MAKING. IN FURTHER DEFINING AND DELIVERING OUR MESSAGE, WE MUST CLOSELY EXAMINE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL POLICY GOALS.

THE MOST UP-TO-DATE SOURCE FOR EXAMINING NATIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY CONCERNS FOR THE 1980'S IS THE CARL D. PERKINS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT. THROUGHOUT THE ACT ARE EMPHASES ON THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SUCH AREAS AS PRODUCTIVITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND DEFENSE. A PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE MUST BE TRAINED, AND IF NECESSARY, RETRAINED. EFFECTIVE DEFENSE RELIES ON UP-TO-DATE INDUSTRIES AND TECHNICIANS. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OCCURS WHEN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY LOCATE IN PLACES WHERE SKILLED WORKERS ARE AVAILABLE AND CAPABLE, AND WHEN THE NEEDS OF BOTH EMPLOYERS AND THOSE SEEKING EMPLOYMENT ARE MET. EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN US THAT AVAILABILITY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

MORE STRONGLY THAN BEFORE, THE NEW ACT ARTICULATES THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN FULFILLING SOCIAL POLICY. WITH THE SPECIFIC PERCENTAGE SET-ASIDES FOR THE HANDICAPPED, THE DISADVANTAGED, SINGLE PARENTS AND HOMEMAKERS, ADULTS WHO NEED TRAINING AND RETRAINING, PERSONS WHO PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ELIMINATE SEX BIAS AND STEREOTYPING, AND ALSO INCARCERATED PERSONS, THE CONGRESS MADE CLEAR THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WILL BE INSTRUMENTAL IN RESPONDING TO A SPECIALIZED SET OF NEEDS. THE REQUIRED SET-ASIDES DO NOT PROVIDE

THE STATES MUCH FLEXIBILITY. RATHER, THEY FIRMLY INVOLVE THE STATES IN A CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED NATIONAL POLICY OF ACCESS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS.

LET ME BE SPECIFIC HERE FOR A MOMENT AND NOTE THE ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY WE HAVE FOR PROVIDING THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR THOSE IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS WHO ARE HANDICAPPED.

AS YOU KNOW THE CONGRESS REQUIRES THAT 10% OF THE FUNDS FROM PART A OF TITLE II BE USED FOR DIRECT SERVICES TO THE HANDICAPPED.

ADDITIONALLY, WE MUST BE SURE THE INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED BY SECTION 204(C)(1) OF THE ACT BE BLENDED INTO EACH INDIVIDUAL'S EDUCATION PLAN (I.E.P.). WE MUST ALSO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT OUR HANDICAPPED LEARNERS RECEIVE THE NECESSARY SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES, SUCH AS GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING, THEY REQUIRE TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN OUR PROGRAMS.

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN OUR ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED SECONDARY STUDENTS ENROLLED IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. OUR DATA LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLING ABOUT 30% OF THE HANDICAPPED SECONDARY SCHOOL POPULATION. THERE IS MUCH MORE TO BE DONE IN THIS AREA!!

IN COMBINATION WITH THE ACCESS REQUIREMENTS, THE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS CREATE A NEW THRUST IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND ITS RELATION TO NATIONAL POLICY. BY REQUIRING 43 PERCENT OF THE BASIC

GRANT TO BE SPENT ON PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION. CONGRESS CLEARLY EMPHASIZED THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS MUST IMPROVE AND EXPAND. AGAIN, WE'RE LOOKING AT A MANDATED NATIONAL POLICY. WE DID HOWEVER RECOGNIZE IN THE NEW REGULATIONS THAT SOME PROGRAMS, BY THEIR VERY NATURE, IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. CERTAINLY THESE PROGRAMS FULFILL THE CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE.

THE ACT ALSO FURTHER EMPHASIZES THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS OF BOTH THE EDUCATIONAL AND THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ARE TO BE INVOLVED IN PLANNING AND IN FUNDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. ADDITIONALLY, PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE TO BE FURTHER INVOLVED IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ENTERPRISE. YOU WILL BE REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AS YET ANOTHER PART OF THE STATES' VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM.

IV. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EVALUATION

SAYING THAT WE "RESPOND TO NEEDS" CONNOTES A RESPONSIBILITY ON OUR PART, A RESPONSIBILITY TO MEET THE MANY NEEDS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SERVES. THIS NOTION OF RESPONSIBILITY LEADS ME TO THE AREA OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EVALUATIONS.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS MARKED BY PROGRESS AT ALL LEVELS. IN RECALLING MY OWN ROLE OVER THE PAST FOUR AND ONE HALF YEARS, WE PARTICULARLY FOCUSED ON PRIORITY INITIATIVES WHICH WE AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL COULD CARRY OUT, WITH YOUR COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION.

I AM PROUD OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS IT IS PRACTICED AND TAUGHT IN OUR CLASSROOMS. IT IS, OVERALL, A SOLID QUALITY PROGRAM! PERHAPS ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR FIELD IS ITS CAPACITY FOR INCORPORATING AND DEMONSTRATING WHAT EDUCATION SECRETARY WILLIAM BENNETT CALLS "THE THREE C'S:" CHOICE, CONTENT, AND CHARACTER.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HAS ALWAYS INCORPORATED CHOICE INTO ITS AGENDA. IN THE AREA OF CURRICULUM CONTENT, WE HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO REVITALIZE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THROUGH PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT, AS WELL AS TO CONTINUE CURRENT QUALITY CURRICULA. CHARACTER-BUILDING HOLDS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. BY ITS NATURE, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHES THE WORK ETHIC, A RESPECT FOR QUALITY, AND A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CONSUMERS.

IN KEEPING AWARE OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, WE MUST BE EVER VIGILANT CONCERNING THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE DELIVER ON OUR GOALS. EVALUATION OF OUR PROGRAMS IS ESSENTIAL IN THIS PROCESS. STATES MUST SET GOALS AND MONITOR STEPS TOWARD ACCOMPLISHMENT. INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS MUST STATE THEIR PURPOSE AND THEN MONITOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AFTERWARD. SUCH MONITORING IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE, AT THE BOTTOM LINE, THE SIZE OF THE FEDERAL INVESTMENT IS A FUNCTION OF HOW WELL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SUCCEEDS IN PROVIDING A RETURN ON THAT INVESTMENT!!

CAREFUL, RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH IS THE KEY TO KEEPING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ON THE CUTTING EDGE. CERTAINLY WE HAVE SUCH RESEARCH AVAILABLE; THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

IS THE MAIN RESOURCE. HERE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF WHAT WE'VE FOUND OUT THROUGH THE INVESTMENT WE HAVE MADE IN RESEARCH CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:

- SEVERAL STUDIES HAVE INDICATED THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COURSES PLAY A ROLE IN KEEPING DROPOUT-PRONE STUDENTS IN SCHOOL. IT IS A NATIONAL TRAGEDY THAT 28% OF OUR STUDENTS DROP OUT. WORSE YET ARE THE STATISTICS FOR BLACKS AND HISPANICS. FOR THEM THE RATE IS 48% AND 42% RESPECTIVELY. THE NATIONAL CENTER'S PREVENTION OF DROPOUTS STUDY SHOWS THAT SEVERAL FORCES COMBINE TO KEEP A STUDENT IN OR OUT OF SCHOOL. SUCH INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AS LOW SELF-ESTEEM OR PARTICIPATION IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES ARE PART OF THESE FORCES. BUT AN IMPORTANT FINDING IS THAT, ALL ELSE BEING EQUAL, THE MORE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS HAD TAKEN, THE LESS LIKELY THEY WERE TO DROP OUT.

- IN THE AREA OF LABOR MARKET EFFECTS, NATIONAL DATA INDICATE THAT SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES WITH A VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CONCENTRATION TEND TO EXPERIENCE SUCH BENEFITS AS GREATER PARTICIPATION AND LONGER PERIODS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK FORCE, LOWER UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, FEWER WEEKS OF UNEMPLOYMENT, AND HIGHER ANNUAL INCOME AS COMPARED TO OTHER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO DO NOT GO ON TO COLLEGE AND WHO HAVE LITTLE OR NO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE.

- LOOKING AT BASIC SKILLS, RESEARCH TELLS US THAT VOCATIONAL STUDENTS SCORE LOWER ON PROFICIENCY TESTS THAN DO ACADEMIC STUDENTS. IN FURTHER EXPLORING THESE RESULTS, THOUGH, WE FIND THAT STUDENTS IN WORK SETTINGS HAVE A DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLE THAN THOSE IN CLASSROOM SETTINGS. THE STUDENT IN THE WORK SETTING DOES LEARN THE BASIC SKILLS MORE SLOWLY THAN THE ACADEMIC STUDENT, BUT BY LEARNING THE SKILLS IN A WORK SETTING HE OR SHE RETAINS THEM LONGER. OTHER FINDINGS SHOW THAT PART-TIME WORK, WHICH IS OFTEN PART OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT ON SUCH PRACTICAL SKILLS AS BUSINESS PRACTICES, MONEY MATTERS, AND CONSUMER MATH.

- RESEARCH STUDIES ALSO TELL US ABOUT THE BENEFITS THAT EMPLOYERS REAP FROM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. IN SURVEYING NEARLY 4,000 EMPLOYERS, RESEARCHERS FROM THE NATIONAL CENTER FOUND THAT JOB-RELEVANT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DECREASED FORMAL ON-THE-JOB TRAINING BY ABOUT 20 PERCENT, COMPARED TO NEW EMPLOYEES WITH NO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. INFORMAL TRAINING BY MANAGEMENT AND COWORKERS ALSO DECREASED, BY ABOUT 14 PERCENT. RELEVANT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE ALSO INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY, AS NEW EMPLOYEES WITH VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCE SHOWED 9 PERCENT MORE PRODUCTIVITY DURING THEIR FIRST TWO WEEKS THAN THEIR COUNTERPARTS WITH NO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THE FORMER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS MAINTAINED A HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY RATE -- ABOUT 6.5 PERCENT -- FOR AS LONG AS THREE YEARS AFTER HIRING.

THESE EXAMPLES FORM A MINISCULE AND HIGHLY SELECTIVE ILLUSTRATION OF THE INFORMATION WE ALREADY HAVE ACCUMULATED ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. IT IS VITAL TO LET THE RIGHT PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT THESE FINDINGS. THOSE "RIGHT PEOPLE" ARE THE POLICYMAKERS. AS I SAID EARLIER. BUT THE "RIGHT PEOPLE" ARE ALSO THE TEACHERS THEMSELVES. WE MUST RECOGNIZE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS' PART IN DEVELOPING QUALITY EDUCATION. AS STATE DIRECTORS. YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY TO GIVE YOUR TEACHERS THAT RECOGNITION. BUT TO HELP THEM USE THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO FURTHER DEVELOP QUALITY PROGRAMS. WE DON'T HAVE TO LAUNCH SOMETHING NEW TO SHOW SUCCESSES -- WE HAVE BUILT MUCH TO BE PROUD OF ALREADY.

ONE FINAL POINT BEFORE I CLOSE. THE "RIGHT PEOPLE" MUST KNOW VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. THIS SUPPORT IS DOCUMENTED BY <u>"THE 17TH ANNUAL GALLUP POLL OF THE PUBLIC'S ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS"</u> FINANCED BY PHI DELTA KAPPA.

LET ME QUOTE A PART OF THIS REPORT FOR YOU.

> "75% OF THE RESPONDENTS FELT THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SHOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THE NON-COLLEGE BOUND. 37% FELT IT SHOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THE COLLEGE BOUND."

IT IS CLEAR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. AMERICAN EDUCATION IS STRONG BECAUSE IT SERVES ALL THE PEOPLE. WE CANNOT PERMIT IT TO BECOME ELITIST. "WE ARE JUST AS ILL EDUCATED IF WE ARE IGNORANT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE AS WE ARE IF WE HAVE NEVER READ A SHAKESPEARE PLAY."

V. CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION, I WANT TO SAY THAT IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION. THE FIELD IS FACING MANY CHANGES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES! FROM MY 35 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND ESPECIALLY OVER THESE PAST FOUR AND ONE HALF YEARS, I KNOW BEYOND A DOUBT THAT THE FIELD ALSO HAS THE CAPACITY TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AHEAD. I TAKE PRIDE IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS WE HAVE ATTAINED, TOGETHER! MY SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT DURING MY TENURE. I LEAVE MY OFFICE ASSURED THAT UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WILL CONTINUE TO MEET ITS CHALLENGES AND SIGNIFICANTLY SHAPE AMERICA'S FUTURE. MAY GOD BLESS YOU IN THE CHALLENGING TIMES AHEAD!